

**REMARKS**

The Examiner is thanked for indicating that claims 22 and 23 are allowable

The office action rejects claims 1-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by one or more of U.S. Patents Nos. 5,302,251 to Schiel; 4,559,258 to Kiuchi; and 5,840,378 to Nagura. In response, the rejections are traversed for at least the following reasons.

With respect to Schiel, it is submitted that the crests 27 relied upon by the Examiner are not guides as recited in claim 1 of the instant application. Further, claim 1, as amended, recites “said fabric comprising one or more guides made of a guide material attached to machine direction edges of a wear surface,” thereby further clarifying what one of skill in the art would already understand the term “guides” to mean. Namely, that for a fabric or belt a guide must by definition run in the MD. Accordingly, the crests 27 cannot be equated with the “one or more guides made of a guide material attached to machine direction edges of a wear surface” of claim 1.

Similarly, Kiuchi does not teach “one or more guides made of a guide material attached to machine direction edges of a wear surface.” Kiuchi teaches the formation of projections 13, coupled with channels 14 for dewatering. The channels and projections are not guides, as taught by the instant application “guides [are] intended to fit into a peripheral groove in each of the rolls.” (p. 2, lns. 14-15). By their layout and design, the channels and projections of Kiuchi cannot and do not act as guides. Further, the projections 13 are not “attached to machine direction edges of a wear surface” as recited in claim 1. Accordingly, the channels and projections cannot be equated with the guides of claim 1.

Finally, with respect to Nagura, the Examiner has alleged that Nagura teaches “a v-guide 8 at the ends of the belt that fills in at least 85% of the fabric structure.” (*Office Action*, at ¶ 4).

The Examiner also directs attention to Fig. 12 and the portions of the specification at col. 2, lines 17-43, col. 5, lines 41-59 and col. 6, lines 38-48. In an effort to clarify this point, the full text of the portions of the specification highlighted by the Examiner are set forth below:

This invention further concerns a method for the production of a condensing endless fabric for paper material, characterized by **laying a thermoplastic resin sheet, 30-50 mm in width and 1-1.5 mm in thickness**, on at least one end of either selvage **in the direction of width of an endless fabric** formed by weaving plastic monofilaments, **thermally pressing the sheet thereby filling not less than 85% of the empty space in the woven fabric** in the selvage with thermoplastic resin and consequently **forming an antiflexing part, 30-50 mm in width**, welding a ridge of thermoplastic resin on the running surface of the antiflexing part thereby disposing the ridge as welded integrally with the thermoplastic resin of the antiflexing part, and **disposing a platelike reinforcing strip formed by filling not less than 85% of the empty space in the woven fabric with thermoplastic resin in a length substantially equal to the width of the woven fabric as extended between the opposite ends of the width**. The woven fabric formed of plastic monofilaments may be a multi-ply woven fabric. Further, according to this invention, the endless woven fabric may be formed by preparing a length of woven fabric by weaving plastic monofilaments, abutting the opposite end parts of the woven fabric, setting a reinforcing strip on the side opposite the running surface of the abutted parts, and fastening the reinforcing strip with the abutted parts by simultaneous application of heat and pressure.

col. 2, lines 17-43 (emphasis added)

As applicant's attorneys have before attempted to describe to the Examiner, the specification makes clear an anti-flexing part of the fabric is formed and that that 85% of the empty space of the woven fabric is filled with thermoplastic resin and extends in the CD direction across the fabric to form the anti-flexing part. The specification is clear that the "ridge" is at best welded to the anti-flexing part, but in any event the ridge cannot itself encapsulate more than 15% of the empty space of the fabric. In contrast, claim 1 describes a guide that

encapsulates at least 50% of the fabric. Similar limitations on the amount of fabric that the ridge of Nagura can encapsulate are found throughout the specification and are particularly evident in the portions cited by the Examiner, for example:

This invention may further provide the condensing endless fabric with platelike reinforcing strips formed by filling not less than 85% of the empty space in the woven fabric with thermoplastic resin in a length nearly equal to the width of the fabric as extended between the opposite end parts of the fabric.

The reinforcing strips disposed on the woven fabric impart rigidity to the woven fabric, prevent the woven fabric from gathering wrinkles, permit the woven fabric to acquire increased tensile strength enough to confine possible variation in the elongation of the fabric in the direction of width thereof, and manifest an effect of preventing the woven fabric, when rotated endlessly, from advancing obliquely. Properly, the strips have a width in the range of 20-50 mm. If this width is less than 10 mm, the reinforcing strips will insufficiently manifest the effects mentioned above. If the width exceeds 50 mm, the excess will result in lowering the permeability of the woven fabric to water and producing adverse effects on the effect of condensation.

col. 5, lines 41-59 (emphasis added)

Still further description clarifying that at most the ridge of Nagura cannot encapsulate more than 15% of the fabric can be found in the final portion of the specification cited by the Examiner, where it states that:

The amount of the resin to form the reinforcing strips is required to be enough to fill not less than 85% of the empty space in the portion of the woven fabric forming the strips. If this amount is not more than 85%, the reinforcing strips will not be enough in bonding strength with the woven fabric, rigidity, and tensile strength.

The term "platelike" used herein in describing the shape of the reinforcing strips of this invention embraces bar-like objects. The provision of the reinforcing strips brings about the following outstanding effects.

col. 6, lines 38-48

Accordingly, contrary to the Examiner's assertions, the ridge does not encapsulate 85% of the fabric as alleged by the Examiner. Rather at most it encapsulates a maximum of 15%. Accordingly, Nagura does not teach "one or more guides made of a guide material attached to machine direction edges of a wear surface of the fabric so to encapsulate approximately fifty percent or more of the fabric caliper with the guide material in a region where the guide is attached to the fabric."

Therefore, for at least these reasons discussed above, claim 1 of the instant application patentably distinguishes over the relied upon portions of the cited references and is allowable. Withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 is requested.

In the event that the Examiner disagrees with any of the foregoing comments concerning the disclosures in the cited prior art, it is requested that the Examiner indicate where in the reference, there is the basis for a contrary view.

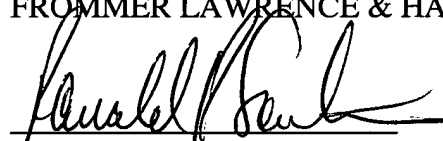
**CONCLUSION**

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable over the prior art, and early and favorable consideration thereof is solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fee that may be required to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,  
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